

Taco dinner illness outbreak investigation continues

(KAIR)--14 persons have tested positive for Salmonella following the launch of an investigation after a suspected outbreak arose from a dinner held at a Doniphan County church.

The investigation, jointly worked by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment and the Doniphan County Health Department, began following an August 7 election day Indian Taco dinner at the Highland United Methodist Presbyterian Church.

Following the report of illness, the health agencies launched a survey to collect illness and exposure information from dinner attendees.

According to a news release issued Friday, 115 persons have completed the survey.

69 of the respondents reported gastrointestinal illnesses, and 14 tested positive for Salmonella Newport, a specific strain of the infection.

The release calls the numbers preliminary as the investigation continues.

The testing of food served at the dinner has been completed, with all testing negative of salmonella except for a sample of tomatoes. However, it's noted that tomatoes were provided by multiple people, with "an environmental assessment of the sources of tomatoes planned to potentially determine how this contamination occurred."

The KDHE is also assessing whether other persons that did not attend the dinner could have been sickened by consuming the tomatoes.

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